

CLARK COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Always working for a safer and healthier community



Report to the Community July 2004



Dr. Karen Steingart, Health Officer



Kay Koontz, Director



The Health Department will move into the Center for Community Health, scheduled for completion in 2005.

The opportunities of change

2003 was the Health Department's first year operating as part of Clark County, marking a successful transition from what was formerly the Southwest Washington Health District. The county structure gives us numerous advantages such as greater technological resources, interdepartmental partnership opportunities, and information-sharing. Through this period of transition, our commitment to public health remains unflagging as we work to stop the spread of disease and promote a healthy populace in Clark and Skamania counties.

I will retire at the end of July after 24 years with public health in Clark County. During this time of dramatic population growth and changing demographics, public health has risen to the challenges and I take great pride in our many accomplishments—from developing dental and maternity clinics for low-income families to improving food handler testing methods, from reducing tobacco use in adults and youth to helping the community prepare and respond to public health emergencies.

I am delighted to “hand over the reins” of the health department to an exceptionally talented public health leader. John Wiesman leaves Public Health—Seattle & King County to become the Clark County Health Department's new director. I've no doubt John will take public health in Clark County to even greater heights as it grows and expands. Additionally, John will be key in the hiring of a new County Health Officer to replace our departing champion of public health, Dr. Karen Steingart.

To the many dedicated public health professionals and community partners I've worked with over the years, please accept my deep gratitude for enriching my experience here and for all you've done for public health in our area.

Kay Koontz, Director

July 1, 2004

Farewell to Karen Steingart

After devoting 18 years to public health in Clark County, County Health Officer Dr. Karen Steingart resigned to care for her ailing mother. Her legacy to the community is considerable. For example, she:

- Convened the first Clark County community-wide HIV/AIDS task force.
- Facilitated the county's first childhood immunization survey, helping to improve childhood vaccination rates.
- Convened Community Choices 2010, specifically the work group that created the Community Report Card.
- Helped catalyze community initiatives to address tobacco use and prevent its use by children.
- Created a “seamless” surveillance system between public health and the medical community to protect the public against infectious disease, including newly emerging diseases such as West Nile virus and SARS.
- Educated the community about anthrax, smallpox, and other agents of bioterrorism.

The list is vastly longer, but it suggests her dedication, vision, creativity, and dynamic spirit. Always generous with her time, Dr. Steingart has volunteered her remarkable talents here and overseas. Although she maintains she has received more than she's given, that seems unlikely. Health Department staff thank her for everything and wish her all the best in her new endeavors.



Keeping the lid on infectious diseases

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, be assured that staff from Epidemiology and Clinical Services will work 24/7 to provide the information and services needed to stem the spread of the disease. In a new world of emerging diseases, disasters, and terrorism, staff are prepared for all possibilities. They provide a public safety net that lets us all breathe easier.

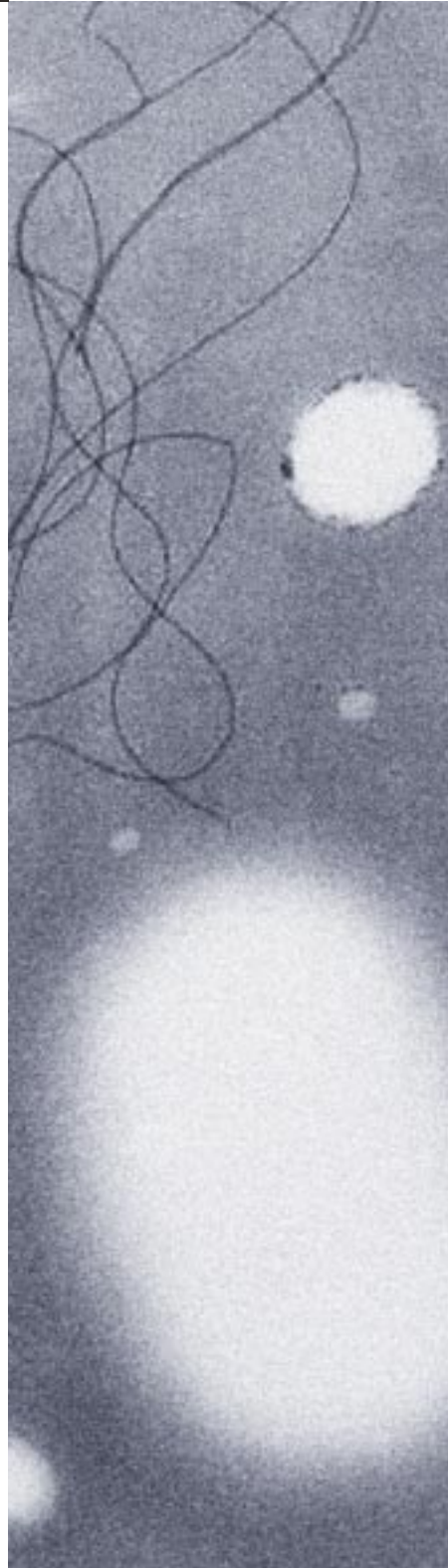
Recent highlights

- Responded to infectious disease outbreaks including pertussis (whooping cough), foodborne origin, and norovirus (winter vomiting disease).
- Provided 138,980 doses of childhood vaccine to Clark County healthcare providers.
- Held a smallpox vaccination clinic for public health and medical workers who volunteered to participate on smallpox public health emergency response teams.
- Became an integral part of the emergency response network, with other key first response partners, including the hospital, police, fire, and CRESA.
- Conducted an ongoing investigation of and response to increases in gonorrhea and syphilis, including false positive gonorrhea tests in low-risk women.
- Investigated a case of meningococcal meningitis to prevent exposed persons from acquiring the disease.
- Researched and provided data about the community for Community Choices 2010's 2003 Community Report Card.

Epidemiology and Clinical Services,

Marni Storey Division Manager

- *Clinic services – immunizations, refugee screening, health access programs*
- *Family planning and sexually transmitted disease services*
- *Public health emergency preparedness and response*
- *Infectious disease and tuberculosis prevention and control*
- *Assessment and research, community health data*





Touch screen technology and multi-language options improve efficiency and convenience of food worker education and testing.

Environmental Health Services

Lou Dooley
Division Manager

■ *Consumer protection – food safety, water systems, public pools and spas, water resources*

■ *Resource protection – liquid waste, solid waste, site hazard assessment, complaint program*

■ *Administrative support*

■ *Skamania County environmental health*

Keeping our environment safe for people to live in

Most of us just assume that we won't get sick from the water we drink, from eating in our favorite restaurant, or from the lake we swim in. If we tend to take these things for granted, we can applaud Health Department staff for their efforts to reduce the threats to public health from hazards in the environment.

Recent highlights

■ In 2003, we reviewed 260 public and private water systems; added 4,200 septic systems to the operations and maintenance program; conducted 3,090 food inspections; investigated 177 concerns of possible foodborne illnesses and responded to 303 service requests; inspected 340 swimming pools and spas; conducted 171 land use evaluations.

■ Implemented Clean Stream, Salmon Creek, a program to reduce sources of coliform bacteria in Salmon Creek and make citizens more aware of the importance of clean water, public health, and property stewardship.

■ Began routine water sampling at Vancouver Lake in May 2004. Results are posted at www.clark.wa.gov/health/environmental/beaches/Vancouver-Lake.html.

■ Conducted a 2003-2004 arsenic study that revealed isolated pockets of high arsenic levels in water supplies in northwest Clark County. Provided residents with information on testing their water and protecting their health.

■ Implemented an active West Nile virus surveillance, prevention, and response plan in 2003. As of June 2004, no cases of West Nile virus had been found in Washington state.

Clark County Health Department

Our mission is to protect and promote the health of people in Clark and Skamania counties. We work to:

■ *Prevent the spread of disease*

■ *Protect against health threats in food and water*

■ *Respond to emergencies*

Clark County Board of Health

Betty Sue Morris

Judie Stanton

Craig Pridemore

Skamania County Health Department

In 2003, Skamania County also formed its own health department, contracting with the Clark County Health Department to provide public health services. This unique contractual relationship between the counties was created without disruption of public health services. The Skamania County commissioners serve as the county's Board of Health.

For more information, contact:

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Columbian photo

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program helps parents understand their child's growth, development and nutrition needs.



Columbian photo

Youth group BREATHE holds outdoor bowling event to highlight the hazards of secondhand smoke in bowling alleys.

Community Health and Wellness Janet Charles, Division Manager

- Nutrition Services and WIC
- Parent and child health
- Tobacco prevention
- HIV/AIDS prevention and care services, regional coordination
- Skamania County personal health

Offering people tools that protect their health

We all make important decisions that shape our health—for example, decisions about what to eat, how much exercise to get, or whether or not to smoke. To help people make healthy choices, Health Department staff work with community partners to share prevention information and support healthy living environments. Staff services and outreach help prevent chronic disease while promoting safe and nurturing families, healthy child development, good nutrition, and physical activity.

Recent highlights

- The HIV Outreach and Prevention program, one of five selected in Washington as a pilot, began using the new HIV Rapid Test in May, 2004.
- The Oral Health program provided education and over 500 fluoride varnishes to children in WIC and HeadStart, protecting their teeth from decay. Of the children screened in 2003—mostly 3 years and under—25 percent had dental decay.
- Parent and Child Health joined a local coalition addressing violence and other behaviors in pre-school children. The program was also recognized by the Office of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention for using acupuncture to calm parents and encourage their attendance at parenting classes.
- A \$207,000 Ryan White Title I contract was negotiated with Multnomah County to support services for persons living with HIV and AIDS in Clark County. The HIV/AIDS Case Management program served over 200 people, assuring access to health care and related services.

■ WIC staff provided nutrition education to 12,993 women, infants, and children in 2003. Participants' WIC vouchers purchased \$4,364,029 worth of healthy foods from local stores, including \$53,290 for fruits and vegetables at the Vancouver Farmers Market.

Public Health Advisory Council helps to set priorities

In 2003, the Clark County Board of Health established the Clark County Public Health Advisory Council. The council's goals are to improve the health of the citizens of Clark and Skamania counties, promote public participation in identifying public health needs, and foster greater communication between the Board of Health and the citizens of Clark and Skamania counties.

Representing a broad range of professional and community perspectives, council members have identified and prioritized the community's significant public health issues. Improving childhood health has emerged as the major community focus.

Council members:

Marilyn Butler	Jane Johnson
Joan Caley	Beth Keeth
Liz Cerveney	Sandra Mathewson
Paul Childers	Dr. Clinton Harrell
Mark Collier	Jacqueline Palmer
Dawn Doutrich, Ph.D	Anya Pavlovic
Marian Erikson	Steve Prather
Tom Griffith	Dr. Mary Shepard
Dean Hummels, DVM	Dr. Karen Steingart
Patricia Janik	Chris Whitting
Gene Johnson	

Birth and death certificates

The Health Department's Records unit provides death certificates for citizens of Clark County, and birth certificates for citizens born in the state of Washington. These records are also available at www.vitalchek.com.



Public Health Advisory Council

Investing in Public health

Per capita, it costs just a few dollars to vaccinate a child, improve parenting skills, reduce mosquito populations, or educate kids against the dangers of tobacco. The payoff? Preventing a host of future problems that can cost a community dearly—from failing health, to declining business productivity, to rising health care costs. For instance, every public dollar spent in reproductive health care saves three dollars in medical care costs for women and newborns (*Alan Guttmacher Institute*).



Clark County Health Department

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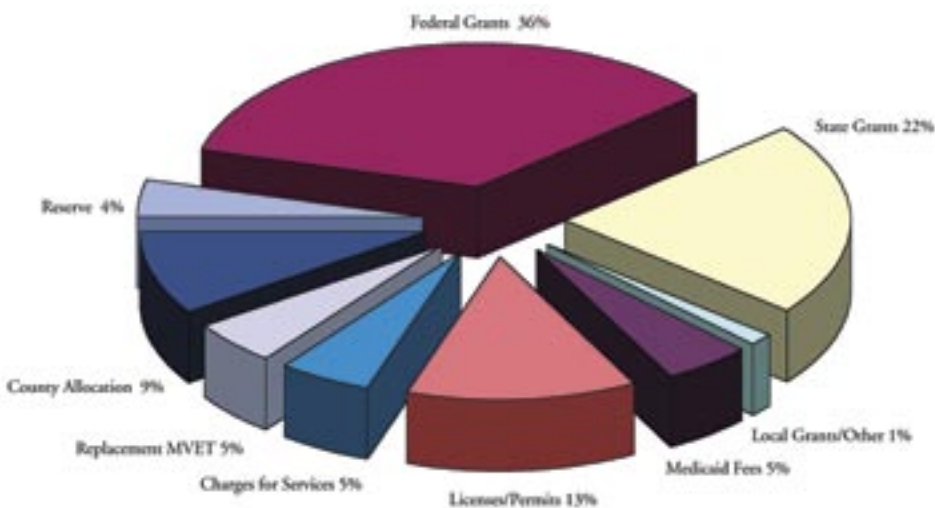
E-mail: Health.Department@clark.wa.gov

Website: www.clark.wa.gov/health

Clark County Health Department 2003/2004 Biennial Budget

Revenue by Source

\$28,307,993



Expenditures by Program

Indirect costs are included in each program

